IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend claims as follows:

1-11.   (Canceled)

12.   (Currently amended) A distributed service system, the system comprising:

a register device for conducting a transaction;

a first peripheral device configured to communicate information regarding the transaction according to a first protocol;

a protocol converter coupled to the register device and the first peripheral device, the protocol converter configured to receive information from the first peripheral device according to the first protocol and communicate the information using TCP/IP; and

a transaction controller coupled to the protocol converter and the register device, the transaction controller operable to facilitate communication between the register device and the protocol converter when the first peripheral device replaces a second peripheral device communicating in a second data format that is incompatible with a first data format used by the first peripheral device, wherein the register device continues to transmit data to the first peripheral device using the second data format and the first peripheral device responds to the register device using the first data format.

13.   (Original) A distributed service system according to claim 12, wherein the register device is a point-of-sale (POS) terminal.

14.   (Original) A distributed service system according to claim 12, wherein the first peripheral device comprises a printer.

15.   (Original) A distributed service system according to claim 12, wherein the first peripheral device comprises a signature-capture platform.

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16.   (Original) A distributed service system according to claim 12, wherein the first peripheral device comprises a PIN pad.

17.   (Original) A distributed service system according to claim 12, wherein the first peripheral device comprises a scanner.

18.   (Original) A distributed service system according to claim 12, wherein the first peripheral device comprises a check reader.

19.   (Original) A distributed service system according to claim 12, wherein the first protocol comprises RS485.

20.   (Previously presented) A distributed service system according to claim 12, wherein the first protocol comprises RS232.

21.   (Previously presented) A distributed service system according to claim 12, wherein the first protocol comprises USB.

22.   (Previously presented) A distributed service system according to claim 12, wherein the first protocol comprises TCP/IP.

23.   (Previously presented) A distributed service system according to claim 12, further comprises a second register device coupled to the protocol converter, the protocol converter further configured to communicate information received from the first peripheral device with the second register device.

24.   (Previously presented) A distributed service system according to claim 12, further comprising a plurality of peripheral devices coupled to the protocol converter.

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25.   (Previously presented) A distributed service system according to claim 12, wherein state information regarding the transaction is stored in the transaction controller and the register device.

26.   (Previously presented) A distributed service system according to claim 12, wherein the register device, the transaction controller, and the protocol converter each comprise an Ethernet connection.

27.   (Previously presented) A distributed service system according to claim 12, wherein the transaction controller provides Jini services.

28.   (Previously presented) A distributed service system according to claim 27, wherein the first peripheral is registered with the Jini services.

29.   (Previously presented) A distributed service system according to claim 12, wherein the register device is remotely located from the first peripheral device.

30.   (Previously presented) A distributed service system according to claim 12, wherein the transaction controller is remotely located from the peripheral device.

31.   (Currently amended) A method for operating a distributed service system, the method comprising:

operating a register device for conducting a transaction at a first location;

operating a first peripheral device configured to communicate information regarding the transaction according to a first protocol;

operating a remotely located protocol converter coupled to the register device and the first peripheral device by a TCP/IP communication link, the protocol converter configured to receive information from the first peripheral device according to the first protocol and communicate the information using TCP/IP; and

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operating a transaction controller remotely located from said register device and coupled to the protocol converter and the register device, the transaction controller operable to facilitate communication between the register device and the protocol converter <u>when the first peripheral device replaces a second peripheral device communicating in a second data format that is incompatible with a first data format used by the first peripheral device, wherein the register device continues to transmit data to the first peripheral device using the second data format and the first peripheral device responds to the register device using the first data format.</u>

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